

SPiRiT OF THE PRESS.

EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS UPON CURRENT TOPICS—COMPILED EVERY DAY FOR THE EVENING TELEGRAPH.

The Last Move.

The President successfully plays his game of political chess. Two more pieces have been captured! Pope and Ord are removed from command. We understand the removal of Pope. He was too much in sympathy with Congress—too anxious to do his work. The "policy" (new edition) is to keep the South out of Congress. If we can only have chaos in the Rebel States—disorder, anarchy, and crime—the country will sooner learn the Presidential lesson that the "nigger" is unfit to vote. Reconstruction must be arrested. The North must be wearied out. The President places himself in the way, hinders the work by removing every man who is in earnest, and so on.

The game goes on—the President winning all the time. Nor do we fail to see that the power which strengthens him is that of General Grant. There is no use of concealing or avoiding this fact. General Grant is an instrument of Mr. Johnson's will. We believe he is so unwillingly, but the country does not consider that. The people only see their General in the War Office. All the moral influence that clusters around the illustrious name of Grant is an element of power to Mr. Johnson. When the rioters in Paris wished to make an attack upon the regular troops, they captured a mayor or a clergyman and marched him at their head, crying—"For Heaven's sake do not shoot the worthy Mayor, or this holy and venerable man of God! Do not be guilty of murder and sacrilege!" The President has captured Grant, and degrades him to the same use as the Parisian rioters. Grant may protest, and fret, and explain—and beg not to be forced into a false position—but the President holds him! We do not place him in a false position. We see the President behind him, controlling and manoeuvring his official actions. If Grant is willingly in the War Office, well; if unwillingly, then he should resign. He serves no national purpose, so far as reconstruction is concerned. The work has been taken from him, and yet the country associates his name with it. We were told, when Sheridan was removed, that Grant could not control reconstruction because he had no power. The bill was so loosely worded that he was helpless. His friends were panting to have the bill amended. Congress is now in the second month of its session, and no proposition for amendment has been offered. Are we to understand that General Grant is satisfied with his position, and with no influence over reconstruction, or with an influence which is negative, powerless, neutral. We do not think so, and we feel that Mr. Washburne, or some one of his friends, should have brought an amendment forward, and should have made a plea to give General Grant the coveted chance of doing something.

We aim to be fair to General Grant, and shall endeavor always to recognize his ability and patriotism. It is because of these qualities that we lament the uses to which he is subjected. And he has no friend to save him! Where are the men who ring the endless changes upon Ulysses the valiant in war, the sage in council? They have the power to place reconstruction in his hands, but they make no sign. Look!—Sheridan is removed! Yes, Grant is sorry and will write a letter about it. The War Minister is benighted! True, and Grant is pained; and while he writes a letter of regret he carries off Stanton's head in a charger, and good friends, be quiet, for we cannot censure this beheading without a word of comment upon the man who struck the blow. Sickles is degraded, and now Pope and Ord! Well, Grant is saving money in the War Department! In reconstruction he is a mere clerk. He has no power, no responsibility, no embarrassing questions to decide, nothing to do with living, immediate issues. He is nothing more than a checked pawn on our chess-board, while the President controls the game, and captures the men piece by piece.

We protest against this as an injustice to General Grant. We believe he would rather be with us—carrying out reconstruction—than to be the captive of Johnson—the bulwark of his administration. He can save money also. No one objects to that! General Grant can follow his economical instincts to his heart's content—but we desire something more. It is prudent to patch the walls and keep the chimney clean; but just now the house is on fire. If General Grant has any power, now is the time to use it. If he has not, let some friend demand it for him. If Congress fails, then he owes it to his fame to leave the administration of Mr. Johnson. The country is not pleased to see the President's impatience work performed "by order of General Grant."

The Degraded Negroes.

"Slavery has degraded the negroes, has made them ignorant and brutal."—Kansas City Journal. It is not very long since a prominent and learned divine from a distant State, in one of the churches of St. Louis, while deprecating the sin of slavery, still thanked God for having made this sin an instrument in His hands for humanizing four millions of a barbarous race, six hundred thousand of whom were actual members of Christian churches, not a few of whom were shining lights in the land. Facts seem to bear out this learned clergyman's declaration, in regard to the moral and intellectual improvement of the negroes of the United States through their contact with and being controlled by the superior white race. If there exists anywhere an equal number of the negro race who occupy the same elevated, moral, and intellectual position of the American negroes, low as that position may be, there are very few who are cognizant of their existence or locality. But suppose it were otherwise—suppose that "slavery has degraded the negroes, has

made them ignorant and brutal," beyond what their race is in their native land, what sense of propriety is there in admitting these worse than Hotentots to all the civil and political privileges of intelligent white men? The Journal desires to clothe the "ignorant and brutal" negroes of all the States with the right of suffrage. The editor says he hopes to live to see the day in which this will be done, and to "aid in its accomplishment." Of course, then, he would prefer to have so many Caffres, Congoes, Hottentots, Eboes, and other native negroes, not so "ignorant and brutal" as ours, because not "degraded by slavery," admitted to the same privileges, were they brought to the United States. Why not start an "Immigrant Aid Society" to encourage the migration hither of the superior native negroes, that by contact and admixture with ours, they might elevate, humanize and enlighten their degraded brethren in this country? This ought to be done, if the declaration of the Journal be true.

But then it is not true. The Journal's editor is only a radical politician, and hence is often driven to the use of bad arguments in supporting a bad cause. That is all.

The Question of Citizenship—England Preparing to Yield.

It begins to be evident that if there is further delay in the adjustment of the difficulties growing out of the question of allegiance and naturalization, the fault will lie with our Government quite as much as with that of Great Britain. The discussion which Mr. Johnson's allusion to the subject has produced in England furnishes ample evidence of the readiness of that country to abandon the absurd pretensions to which it has hitherto clung most tenaciously. Government in England is, after all, in a great degree a Government directed by public opinion; and the Derby Ministry will not be able long to resist the more just opinions in regard to the claims of the monarchy and the rights of the individual, which now for the first time obtain expression in the leading journals. The quickness with which the London Times responded to the President's suggestion showed that the danger of the question is appreciated as well as its equity; and the impression will not be weakened by the striking, though by no means exhaustive, argument of Mr. Vernon Harcourt, who, as "Historicus," has earned a prominent place among British publicists.

Accepting Mr. Harcourt's statement of the case, the wonder is that the common sense of England did not long ago abrogate enactments which are as inapplicable to modern times as any other remnant of feudal power. Except that the Georges renewed the dogma by which the Crown claims the everlasting allegiance of its subjects and their descendants, we might have supposed that the dogma itself, with all its consequences, had passed into the region of the obsolete. To this day, however, it is revived and acted upon as against individuals, when the political purposes of the British Government require its use to justify the assertion of authority. The Fenian movements have led to several instances of this character within the last few months; and at least one court has reaffirmed with true English gravity the non-efficacy of naturalization in the United States, as a means of altering the status of the born subject of Britain. The question is practical, therefore, and urgent. For though, as Mr. Harcourt points out, the British doctrine is too absurd to be upheld as an abstract proposition, and too monstrous to be generally asserted without certain peril, the fact remains that it is still sometimes acted upon, to the injury of persons whom, as adopted citizens, this country is bound to protect.

The conclusions arrived at by Mr. Harcourt as to the manner in which the subject should be disposed of by England cover the whole ground. Thus, in regard to the acquisition of citizenship, he proposes that British citizenship shall belong, "as of course, only to persons born of British parents domiciled in the British dominions;" giving to those born in foreign countries a right of choice to become British citizens, subject to prescribed formalities. With regard to expatriation, he proposes that the right to withdraw from the State and to cancel all allegiance to the Crown shall be unqualifiedly recognized. It is not creditable to England that her lawgivers should be called upon to make solemn expressions of what really are elementary principles of free government; but that is her business, not ours. What we have to insist upon is that the second of these propositions shall be immediately and finally acted upon by England, with the view of ending the complications which are continually recurring in the present state of the law.

The need of a mixed commission of English and American lawyers and statesmen to place the subject on a satisfactory footing is, however, not apparent. So far as this country is concerned, the points involved are not open to argument in a mixed commission, or in any form which implies a readiness to share with England the burden which her own obstinacy and shortsightedness have created. Congress has a duty to perform in the premises by imparting cohesiveness and consistency to American law with respect to citizenship, and probably no more satisfactory basis can be adopted than that which "Historicus" has constructed for England. But this is all which our Government should consent to do. For its own sake—in justice to adopted citizens and the descendants of such—it cannot properly delay whatever legislation is necessary to give certainty and protection to every man who has pledged allegiance to the Republic. The American people will tolerate neither hesitating nor negotiation on a point so vitally affecting their honor and rights. What we have to do is to define clearly and positively the ground of American citizenship, and to make known a determination to maintain that ground against all challenges. It will then be for England to shape its own course as to its rulers may seem best. If prudent, they will face a question which sooner or later must be met, and by adopting the view which "Historicus" has set forth obviate the very grave difficulties to which the pretensions he exposes may any day give rise. The contingencies of England's action or inaction in no degree affect the obligations of our own Government.

Georgia is a Crisis.

It is probable that before this is printed we shall have positive information as to the object for which General Pope has sent a squad of soldiers to Milledgeville. But as longer time may elapse before we are informed as to the intention of the military authority, we append the reports given by the Macon papers of what occurred at Milledgeville when the messenger of the Convention arrived there and made his demand for money from the Treasury. We do not suppose that either General Pope or the members of the Convention expected the State officers to deliver up the public money

in their charge upon any requisition not made in conformity to the law which they had sworn to observe. They surely could not have thought that their requisition was such a one as the laws of Georgia prescribe for the drawing of money from the State Treasury. The Convention does not even seem to have made an appropriation of the money demanded, so as to justify a warrant drawn by the proper authority. It declared by ordinance that the money was to be used in paying the per diem and mileage of the delegates, but it also declared in the same ordinance that the money was to be only borrowed from the Treasury and returned at a future time. This very demand for a loan admits that the expense of the Convention is not a legitimate charge upon the State Treasury. It does not admit the want of authority to pass an appropriation bill and make a requisition on the Treasury for its satisfaction. Moreover, the act of Congress under which the Convention is assembled, expressly declares that it must levy a special tax to pay its own expenses. Congress also made an appropriation to defray the expenses of military government in the Southern States, and if that appropriation be exhausted, so as not to allow any part of it to be used in making an advance for the Convention, the former proves that Congress undertakes the expense of the job. It does not empower the Convention, in anticipation of the completion of its work, to demand the money of a State Government which, in the probable event of the rejection of the Constitution, may never have any connection with the body in session at Atlanta. The Macon Telegraph of yesterday says:—"We rejoice to say that Colonel Jones treated this order in a manner becoming his position as an officer of the State of Georgia, and the custodian of the public money. In reply he stated to Gen. Pope, as we learn from a reliable source, that he was an officer of the State under the Constitution of 1865—that he was sworn to support that Constitution and the laws of the State—that the latter forbade any payment from the Treasury except upon a warrant drawn by the Governor and approved by the Comptroller-General—that he has entered into bonds to a large amount for the faithful performance of his duty as Treasurer, and for these reasons must decline to make the payment required. Mr. Angier is reported to have said in answer to his mission; he should have said that he could be had in satisfaction of any such demand, which would have been much nearer the truth." And the Atlanta correspondent of the Journal and Messenger writes:—"The Governor informed the gentleman from Fulton that he did not recognize the authority of the power under which he (Angier) was acting, and that if there were any funds in the Treasury they would be devoted to legitimate purposes. Something was then threatened about Pope's prerogatives and the constitutional powers of the Convention, to which our Governor replied that if force were attempted to be used against the Treasury Department, the matter would immediately be laid before the Supreme Court of the United States, who, he hoped, not without reason, would pronounce this whole scheme of reconstruction unconstitutional; that General Grant was prepared to abide by the decision of that tribunal, and the President of the United States in that event withdraw the military from the soil of Georgia. The events of the next few days will show if there be any truth in what is here stated."

The Eastern Question Hastening to a Solution.

The Eastern question again looms up portentously in the political horizon of Europe. It assumes an aspect more threatening than at any time since the diplomatists thought they had laid it away forever after the close of the Crimean war. Instead of sleeping, it agitates more and more the minds of statesmen, and causes increasing irritation and inquietude in the royal cabinets of Europe, which in turn entail the expense and trouble of maintaining vast standing armies on a war footing, ready to be sent out to battle at a moment's notice. Indications of every kind point to but one termination of all the discussions, orations, recriminations, and secret workings evolved by this vexed question. The sword must out of the knot which the most subtle and skillful diplomatists have in vain attempted to untie. Russia must find an outlet for its manifest destiny that a nation so grand and growing, so boldly and rapidly treading the upward path of general advancement and universal improvement, should not long remain isolated and out of the world. She must have room and chance to develop her latent powers. The world's market must be open to her where she may send her produce and bring back needful articles in exchange. She has outgrown her limits, and it is in the nature of things that she should demand room for a proper expansion. For seven months in the year her ports are closed by Arctic rigors against her western neighbors, while the States, backed by Christian powers, forbids their entrance by the east. Her geographical position, her internal needs, and her just weight in foreign affairs, unite in firmly demanding that all the barriers erected against her outgrowth by the fears or malevolence of foreign powers should be at once and forever swept away. The Russian policy thus paralyzes the nature of manifest destiny itself, and is so regarded by the Muscovites, and not simply as a temporary line of conduct.

The Military Removals.

The order issued from the headquarters of the army by the command of the President, removing General Pope from the command of the Third Military District, to be succeeded by General Meade; of General Ord from the Fourth Military District, to be succeeded by General McDowell; and of General Swayne from the Freedmen's Bureau, deserves the warm approval of every sincere patriot. So little is known of General McDowell since the close of the war, that we can express no judgment on the fitness of his appointment; but the substitution of General Meade for Pope is so excellent that we are willing to take the other upon trust. We are now fairly in a new era in the administration of the Reconstruction acts. We hope hereafter to witness the reign of law, instead of arbitrary caprice and partisan tyranny, in the Southern States.

We can at length discern some gleams of sense in the strange message which the President sent to Congress enjoining General Hancock. That unaccountable and, taken by itself, almost ridiculous communication, seemed to us a greater puzzle from the fact that, in every other instance, Mr. Johnson's messages have been marked by a vigor, pertinence, and dignity which constantly extorted our praise in spite of the vacillation and shortcomings of his practical administration. It is possible that we do not even yet understand the real intent of the Hancock message, which we thought so foolish, and passed over in regretful silence, at the time; but we can now imagine a tolerable apology for it, if not a complete justification. It was the President's mode of declaring the principles on which the administration of the five military districts will hereafter be conducted, so far as those principles can be maintained by the selection of commanders. He intended to give to Congress and the country, in advance, the reasons of the present order, which he had then determined to issue. An army order would obviously be no suitable vehicle for such information; the President has got over the undignified habit of making stump speeches; and a message explaining to Congress the reasons of these removals would look like acknowledging an accountability to them for acts which are completely at variance with his independent province as Commander-in-Chief of the Army. He was, therefore, under the necessity of explaining the

and it is stated that the Czar has expressed his dissatisfaction to Napoleon with his shifting policy in affairs of the East. If the French Emperor does not withdraw his offensive claims, as he did in the Luxembourg negotiation, he is likely to justify his position by the sword. Russia cannot postpone her steps. Her war preparations for year, her ceaseless activity in her arsenals, and her successful efforts to obtain money, all go to show that she expects a collision, and is making ready for it. The spring of 1868 is likely to be an eventful one, and we may see before the 1st of June a war that shall involve all the great powers on the continent. With a common interest against a common foe, Russia and Prussia will unite against whatever powerful combination Napoleon's skill may be able to form, and decide the Eastern question and that of German unification against France and Austria. In the contest the Christian communities on the Danube, in Servia, Moldavia, Montenegro and the old Grecian peninsula, already ripe for revolt, will play an important part. Meanwhile, as a power friendly to Russia, we may discuss Alabama claims with England, and thus relieve her as well as ourselves from the necessity of joining in the fray.

Two Pictures.

Nelson Walker, a negro, announces himself in the Nashville Times a candidate for the office of Sheriff of Davidson county. A white man, named Jones, was elected on Monday by the Nashville City Council, as a member of the Board of Education. Above are two items that have started their round of the press. They carry the mind back to the Nashville of seven years ago, and speak with an earnest and terrible significance of the barbarism within civilization—imperialism in imperio—that dominated society in those oligarchical days, and also of the breaking up of the Southern organism, of the deluge of passion that swept the old order of things into anarchy, and of the new and remarkable outgrowths when the war of the elements had subsided.

In 1860, Walker was a barber, free, in the Tennessee meaning of the word, when applied to a mulatto, by the Memphis another copper-colored individual of the victim race, was a chattel, upon whose valuation in dollars the master annually paid to the State a direct tax. Neither had the rights of manhood. In the parlance of the time, one was labor owned by a white man, the other was labor owned by himself. In the contemplation of public opinion, both were property, only the proprietors were different. At one time, Walker could have sold himself for so much money, and possessed the inalienable right to how much he would take and from whom he would take it; Memphis might have been transferred to another owner without consultation of his wishes, and the cash arising from the transaction would have gone into the pocket of him at whose bidding he had been compelled to come and go.

Now, how changed the relations of these two colored men to external circumstances! Property no more—the mudsills of Southern society no more—shackled no more by public opinion that binds as closely and as fast with its invisible fetters as the jailer's hand-cuffs. In cases of such kind the military commander must necessarily disregard one or the other; and as he is there at all only by an act of Congress, he must regard the laws of Congress as the paramount authority. But in all cases where there is no conflict he is bound to respect the State laws, which are continued in force for the time being by Congress itself. Sheridan, Pope, and the rest, instead of executing the laws, substituted their personal caprice or partisan feelings; and the President seems determined to reinstate the supremacy of the laws.

The Fenians.

That some Fenians, being Irishmen, should attempt to liberate an imprisoned brother by blowing up the prison in which he was confined, is no more surprising than that Terence O'Donoghue cut off his own head with the scythe hanging over his neck, while attempting to kill a toad with the handle. If it were a less serious matter, the public must have been convulsed with laughter at the misguided ingenuity of these Fenians. If Fenianism were not an Irish "institution," it would not be readily believed that the fellows who put gunpowder under the jail walls were the friends of the prisoners within. Again comes a report that letters containing explosive compounds have been sent through the Post Office to prominent Government officers, and this, too, of course, is blamed upon the Fenians.

Now, the hope of the Fenians to wrest Ireland from England appears to most men as vain and illusory as the failures in all their actual attempts have heretofore been ridiculous, and their plans without foundation in reason. The expectation of helping Ireland by a raid upon a few Canadian villages; or by an army to be transported from this country across the ocean in the face of a vigilant English navy, or by ill-directed and scattering outbreaks in Ireland and later in England, must strike even sensible Irishmen as pitiable. It would be far wiser if the Fenians would use the money and influence they have in agitating peacefully such reforms as are needed in the government of Ireland, and as a large and respectable party in England is ready to help them to. England will no more let Ireland go, than this country would tolerate the secession of South Carolina; but Englishmen will help Ireland to better government if the Irish demand that and continue to demand it.

But while we see the usefulness and folly of the Fenian enterprise, we think it right to warn the American people not to believe every report which comes from England about it. It may be true, or it may be false, that Fenians tried to blow up prisons, and are sending explosive letters to Government officers. There are fools and scoundrels in every organization, and there is reason to believe that the Fenian order does not lack either. But we know also that the English press has always treated its enemies most unscrupulously; English writers misrepresented Americans continually and most indecently during the late war. It is their invariable practice to misrepresent those they do not like, and attribute to them the vilest acts and qualities. It is, therefore, only right that reports which come to us from English sources about the Fenians should be received with caution.

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